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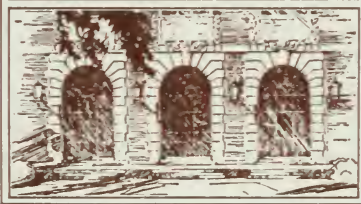
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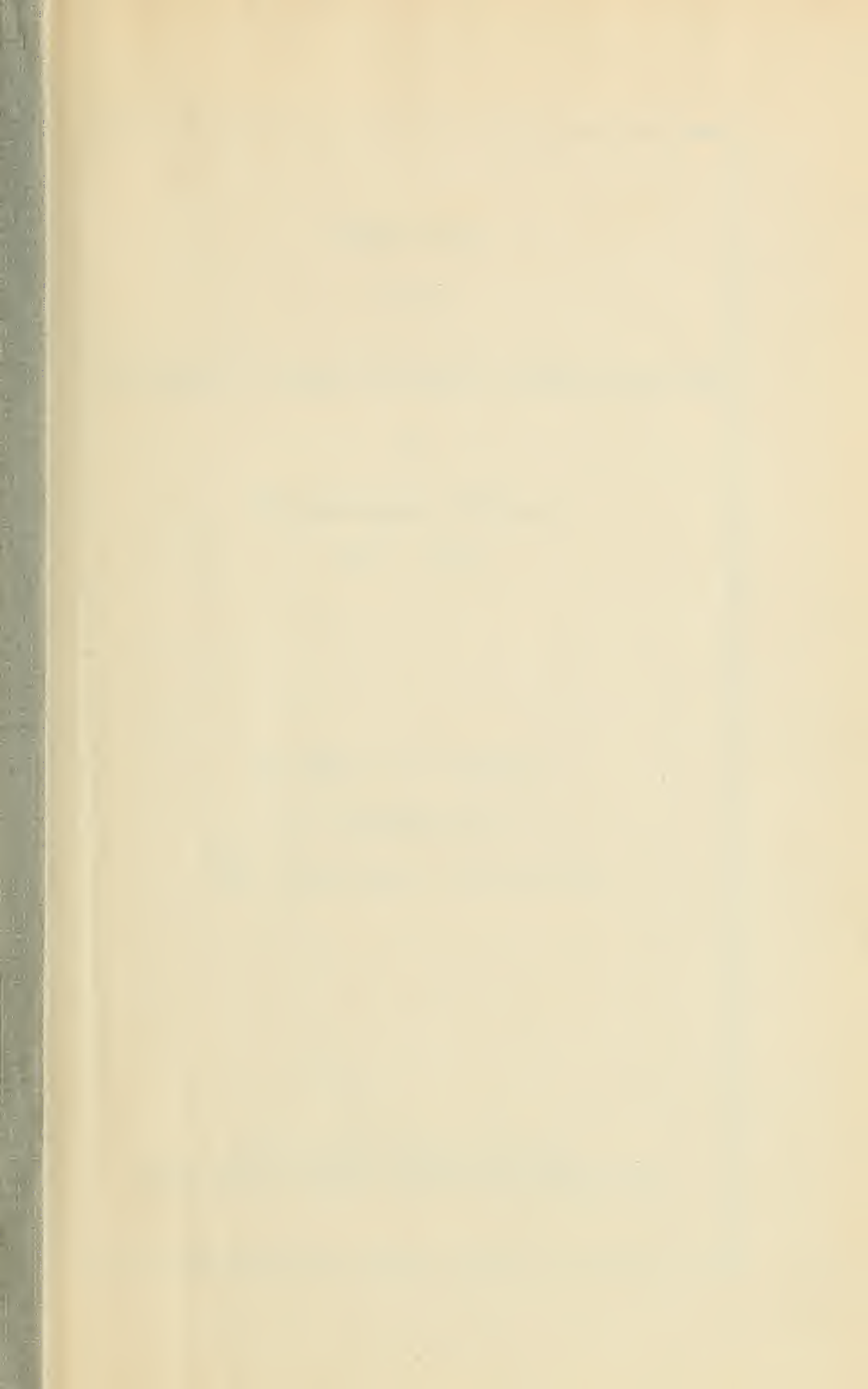
History of the First  
Baptist church of Bloom-  
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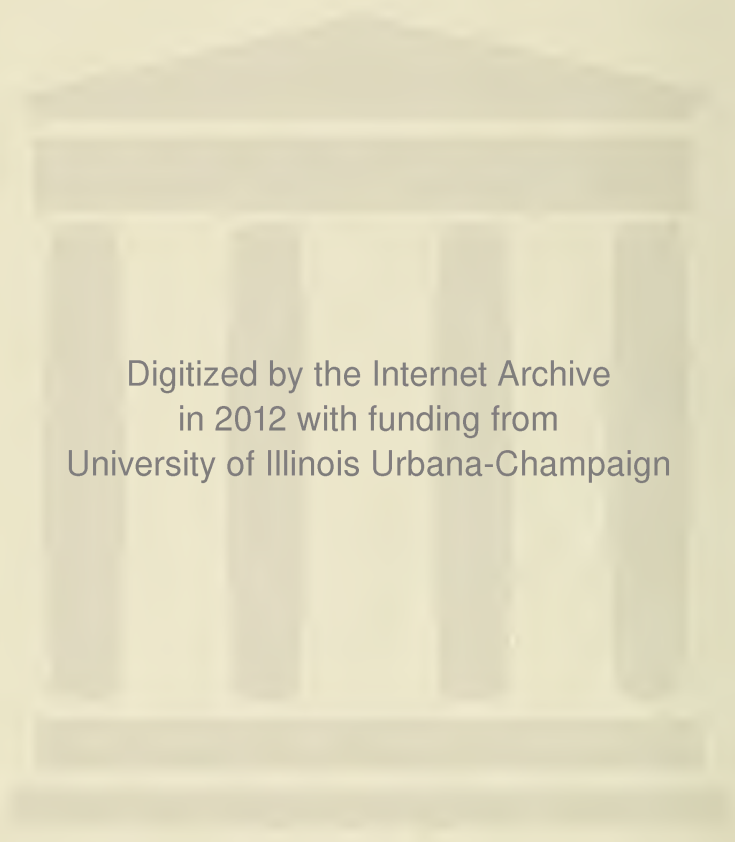




HISTORY  
of the  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
of  
Bloomington, Illinois  
1837 - 1937

By MRS. A. B. HOBLIT  
In Commemoration of  
*The Centennial Anniversary*

WITH A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE  
FIRST GERMAN BAPTIST CHURCH OF BLOOMINGTON



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Frank  
Petersen  
9 Feb 48



# First Baptist Church

BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

The corner stone of the present building was laid June 4, 1888. The completed building was dedicated Sunday, November 25, 1888.

## CHURCH SERVICES

### SUNDAY

Church School . . . . . 9:30 A.M.  
Morning Worship . . . . . 10:45 o'clock  
Evening Worship . . . . . 7:30 o'clock  
Youth Hour . . . . . 6:30 P.M.

### WEDNESDAY

Fellowship Meeting . . . . . 7:30 P.M.



REV. RALPH G. CARSON  
the present pastor, began his Ministry,  
Sunday, September 15, 1935.



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## Foreword

To have lived in this wonderful, God-created world for one hundred years has been a rare and unusual privilege. To have had an active part in the social and religious development and growth of this State and community is still more remarkable. Yet such is the record of the First Baptist Church of Bloomington, Illinois, celebrating this year the rounded out Century of her existence.

Amid the dim records of the past has been found the account of her origin and early history, her struggles and her sacrifices. And through the years, like threads of gold, we find woven the story of her achievements and the realization of many of her dreams and most cherished ideals.

To all those who have aided in this research most sincere thanks are extended.

And may we of the present generation labor as valiantly as did those of the past to uphold the principles of Christianity.

### HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

MRS. A. B. HOBLIT

MRS. J. M. FORDICE

MRS. FRANK L. WASHBURN

DR. E. MAMMEN (deceased)



## The Story of the Years

The history of the First Baptist Church of Bloomington, Illinois, begins soon after that of the County and the town itself. Old records tell us that McLean County was cut off from Tazewell County and organized as a new, separate county by an act of the Legislature, which act was approved December 22, 1830.

Three Commissioners were appointed to carry out the legal requirements. This was the winter of the deep snow and the Commissioners held no meetings until the spring of the following year. Early in May, 1831, they met to lay off and name the new county and to select a county seat. After much discussion the name "McLean" was chosen for the County. This was in honor of Honorable John McLean, a man who stood high in the estimation of the people. He had been several times elected to the Legislature, once to the Lower House of Congress and twice to the United States Senate.

The Commissioners then turned their attention to the selection of the spot, which, for all the years to come, should be the County Seat of the new-born County. This was no easy task. It took not only clear judgment and courage, but also faith and vision.

Several of the very early settlers who had come to this region had chosen a beautiful wooded location which they had named "Blooming Grove," and had built homes there. At this time of year the wild fruit trees were in full bloom, the prairie was carpeted by flowers of every hue, and the peace of God seemed to rest over the unturned sod.

At first this appeared the logical place for the location of the busy city they hoped soon to see rising on the prairie. Again there was discussion and delay. Then Honorable James Allen, who had been active in urging the formation of the new County, offered to give twenty-two and one-half acres of his own land lying north and west of the tract under consideration. A few miles made little difference in those days, so the offer was accepted and the town received its name. Thus Bloomington came into being. The town was soon laid out. The twenty-two and one-half acres were divided into twelve squares, the boundaries were located and the streets named. Front Street marked the southern limits of the town; North Street, now called Monroe Street, marked the northern boundary; East Street, the eastern; and West Street, now called Roosevelt Avenue, the western, with a central space reserved for a Court House.

Most of the earliest settlers of this region were Christian people who longed for the Christian fellowship and religious instruction and inspiration to which they had been accustomed. Whenever possible they met in little groups to talk and pray together, looking forward hopefully to the time when there would be churches, schools, and libraries here. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the land of Central Illinois. Whenever a new-comer arrived, his denominational preference was one of the first questions asked him. In 1824, before there was even a separate County, a little group of seven had formed the First Methodist Church, and for seven years the only preaching services they had were held in the home of one of their number. By this time there was a small one story Court House, which for four years they rented for their religious services.

These devout pioneers of all denominations worked and prayed for the time when each separate group should have its own organization and its own place of worship. As the years passed by and their numbers increased, their hopes found fulfillment. In 1833 the First Presbyterian Church was organized in Bloomington and in 1836 the Methodist denomination dedicated, free from debt, the first church building in Illinois between Chicago and Springfield.

What were the Baptists doing in these pioneer days? They were not idle dreamers, for in 1830 a small group had organized the first Baptist Church we know anything about in this region. It was in Atlanta, then called New Castle, twenty miles south of Bloomington. So far as we can discover there were no Baptists in this immediate vicinity until two years later. But in 1833 several families had arrived and settled here. History tells us that in the early part of the year 1833 there was not a Baptist Church Building in all northern Illinois. There was, however, an Anti-Mission Church in Knox County. In the fall of 1833 the First Baptist Church of Chicago was organized and soon thereafter Tremont, then called Pleasant Grove, came into being.

After the first settlers come into a community and the country is heard of, others soon follow, and in 1836 there was a great rush to Illinois. Bloomington's population increased from 180 in 1834, to 450 in 1836. The year 1837 saw the organization of two more churches in Bloomington, the First Christian in April, and our own First Baptist on December 30, 1837.

Brave pioneers, who builded better than they knew! For upon the foundation they laid has been erected the religious structure that is our strength and support in these days of change and uncertainty. As has been seen, whenever two or three were gathered together, plans for Christian advancement were made. Prominent among the prime movers for a

permanent Baptist organization in Bloomington were David Haggard, Samuel Lander, and William G. Thompson. Throughout their entire lives their interest and cooperation never wavered.

They invited Rev. Isaac D. Newell to visit Bloomington. He had moved to Illinois from Vermont in 1836, and settled in Rushville, but preached many places. He accepted the invitation and came up the river to Peoria, where he was met by Mr. Peter Vance of Danvers, who went with him in looking over the field. The outlook was encouraging; he moved his family here, and began missionary work, preaching in school houses and in private homes.

On the 30th day of December, 1837, having found twenty people in and near Bloomington, who were of one faith, believing in one baptism, and willing and anxious for the formation of a Baptist Church, he called them together. The meeting was held in a little upper room of a building standing at 107 East Olive Street, which belonged to the Presbyterian Church, and which they kindly permitted Rev. Newell to use. Thus was organized the First Baptist Church of Bloomington, Illinois, with twenty members. In the organization of the church, Rev. Newell acted as Moderator and Samuel Lander, as Clerk.

The names of the first members were:

DAVID HAGGARD	SAMUEL LANDER
NANCY HAGGARD	SALLY LANDER
WILLIAM G. THOMPSON	SARAH ROUTT
LOUISA THOMPSON	JOHN BUSUCKER
DANIEL STOGSDILL	PETER WITHERS
LUDWELL E. RUCKER	ELVINA WITHERS
MELVINA RUCKER	SARAH NEWELL
WILLIAM O. WASH	ELIZABETH MASON
JAMES HARBERT	NANCY WILLIAMS
CATHERINE ENLOW	HARRIET NEWELL

Rev. Isaac Newell and Rev. E. Veach were received by letter at this meeting. Rev. Newell was chosen pastor of the newly organized church, and William G. Thompson, Church Clerk. David Haggard and Samuel Lander were elected Deacons.

These Articles of Faith were adopted:

### ARTICLES OF FAITH

I. We believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God, and are a revelation of His existence, perfection, and will, and give us a perfect rule of faith and practice in religion.

II. We believe that God has revealed Himself in His Word under the appellation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which three are one, severally and equally worthy of divine honors and religious worship, and are one God, who is possessor of every natural and moral perfection.

III. We believe that in consequence of our relation to Adam, as the natural though fallen head of mankind, we all inherit his depravity, and immediately prefer sin to holiness as soon as we know good from evil and are capable of moral action.

IV. This depravity consists in an entire disrelish to holiness, and an inclination to sin, which renders it morally certain that none will obey God without a divine influence, yet leaves men free and moral agents, with all necessary facilities to serve Him; consequently all are under obligation to obey the precepts of both law and gospel.

V. The personal election of all true believers to final salvation is predicted in God's foreknowledge of their voluntary faith and obedience, in consequence of which they were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

VI. We believe that to open a way of salvation for sinners Jesus Christ assumed a human nature, in which he died for the sins of the whole world, subsequently arose and ascended into Heaven with his own blood, where He lives an high priest to intercede for all who come to God through Him.

VII. We believe that regeneration is the effect which the Spirit of God produces in the hearts of men by truth, as the means through which they are persuaded to repent and trust in Christ for salvation.

VIII. Saving faith is not only the assent of the understanding to the truth of revelation, but a hearty trust in the blood of Jesus Christ—an invaluable price, which alone can redeem the soul from sin and death.

IX. All true believers will persevere unto eternal life, being kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

X. We are taught by the example of the primitive disciples, sanctioned by the repeated presence of the Savior Himself, that the first day of the week, called the Lord's day, is to be wholly devoted to the worship of God, except so much as works of mercy and necessity require.

XI. We believe that subsequently to the general resurrection of the righteous and wicked, there is to be a general judgment, when Jesus Christ, who is appointed judge, will admit the just to endless happiness, and consign the unjust to endless woe.



At a meeting held in January, 1838, just a few weeks after its organization, the church adopted this

### CHURCH COVENANT

Having been, as we trust, brought by divine grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give ourselves entirely to Him, we do now, in the presence of the great all-seeing and most glorious God, and before angels and men, solemnly covenant with each other, as God shall enable us to walk together in brotherly love, that we will exercise a Christian care and watchfulness over each other, and faithfully admonish and entreat each other as occasion may require.

That we will endeavor habitually to maintain closet and family worship, and to train up those who at any time may be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and, by a pure and lovely example, win our kindred and acquaintances to the Savior—to holiness and eternal life.

That we will participate in each other's joys, and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy, to bear each other's burdens and sorrows; that we will refrain from all recreation, unnecessary labor, and worldly conversation on the Sabbath day.

That we will strive to attend all the stated and special meetings of the church, and by timely efforts, to accomplish such labor as may at any time devolve upon us for the cause of Christ.

That we will cheerfully contribute of our substance to relieve the wants of the industrious poor, and as God shall prosper us, for the support of the gospel among us in such a manner that one shall not be eased and another burdened.

That, by precept and example, we will encourage the entire disuse of all intoxicating liquors as a beverage except when prescribed for medicinal purposes.

That we will not allow ourselves unnecessarily to speak of other's faults in their absence, and especially in the presence of the world, but will endeavor to preserve each other's reputation as our own.

That we will hold communion together in the worship of God, and in the ordinances and discipline of his kingdom according as we are, or shall be, guided by the spirit of God in his Word.

That we will walk circumspectly in the world, and will endeavor to glorify God and promote the highest good of mankind by the right use of our time, talents, and property, praying that God will pardon our many errors and make us perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Now, fully organized, the church began its work. In 1838 our first house of worship was built. It stood at 307 West Monroe Street, and was finished and dedicated early in 1839. Rev. Isaac Newell resigned after a successful pastorate of nearly three years, during which time many had been added to our membership both by baptism and by letter.

Rev. Newell was an outstanding pastor and church organizer in Central Illinois at this period. Besides caring for this church, he worked tirelessly in preaching the Gospel and organizing other churches. Those at Danvers, LeRoy, Randolph's Grove, and many others came into being because of his efforts. Following his resignation, Rev. E. Veach and Rev. Joel Hulsey acted as supplies until November, 1840, when Rev. Charles Dodge became our regular pastor until 1841. For a period of one and one-half years supplies were again depended upon. In 1843 Rev. Lyman Whitney came as our pastor. At this time our membership was nearly one hundred, and a Sunday School was organized. Old records tell us that in 1844 the church suffered great loss of members because of a prevailing epidemic that swept over Central Illinois. The deaths were as one to nine in the church. One half the mothers of families were taken by death. It was a time of great sorrow. Attendance at church services was small. Gloom enshrouded the community.

Rev. Whitney was a tower of strength in these trying times, visiting the sick, comforting the bereaved, upholding the cross of Christ in a stricken community. His labors were greatly blessed and continued more than three years. He was a tireless worker. He would preach in Bloomington in the morning, ride many miles across the prairie to preach to some other struggling church, and then on again to fill another appointment in the evening. The Old Town Church was largely the result of his work. It was set off from the Bloomington church in December, 1847, with seventeen members.

Rev. Thomas Holman succeeded Rev. Whitney but remained only a few months and was in turn followed by Rev. S. W. Miller. In the spring of 1848, a new house of worship was erected at 107 South Madison Street. This was a much larger building than the first one, and more centrally located. In July Rev. Miller resigned and for two years thereafter the work of the church was carried on by Rev. McPherson and Rev. Dodge acting as supplies. During this time the church was in a low state, discouraged and disheartened.

In July, 1850, a pastor was again obtained in the person of Rev. Jason Corwin. While he was pastor, hope returned to the troubled hearts of the church members. The church building was repaired and improved, and encouraging prospects again returned. But at the close of one year's

service, Rev. Corwin resigned, and was succeeded by Rev. H. D. Mason, who began his labors in April, 1851.

For over a year he worked with great acceptance. Because of failing health he asked to be released, but was urged to remain and do whatever his health would permit. In June, 1852, he moved to Atlanta, but soon returned, and shortly thereafter died. His work was a monument to him. Twenty-seven had been added to the church. He was much beloved, and very sincerely mourned.

In September, 1852, Rev. S. P. Ives was called to the pastorate. Under his leadership the church increased in efficiency and in numbers. In a series of meetings held during the latter part of 1853 and the first months of 1854, seventy-two new members were received. Rev. Lewis Raymond assisted the pastor in these meetings.

During Rev. Ives' pastorate of three and one-half years, there were 137 accessions. The last months of his work were especially full of hope and promise. The need for a larger church building became imperative. The lot at the corner of Jefferson and Madison Streets was purchased, a new church building was designed, and its erection undertaken. The lot cost \$2,000; the estimated cost of the building was \$12,000; but it finally cost much more than that sum. The basement was first completed, fitted up, and used for services; but the entire church was not finished until much later.

In February, 1856, Rev. Ives held a series of meetings in the school house at Smith's Grove, about four miles east of Towanda. At the close of these meetings the Smith's Grove Baptist Church was organized.

Rev. J. C. Cairns, a licentiate of the Bloomington Church was soon called to the pastorate and was ordained in October.

For a period of almost twelve years he served as pastor here.

After three years in the school house, a church was erected in Towanda and the name changed to Towanda Baptist Church. After all these years the church continues to hold services each Sunday.

In 1856 Rev. Ives resigned, and was immediately followed by Rev. Herman J. Eddy, who came March 31, 1856. He received a warm welcome because of his genial spirit and fine Christian qualities of mind and heart. The church moved forward; harmony prevailed. Even though times were hard, and rumors of war filled the air, the work of the Lord did not falter.

By the year 1860 the whole country north and south was in the terrors of the Civil War. Financial conditions were disturbed as never before; feeling ran high; no one felt safe. Our pastor asked for a year's leave of absence, joined the Union Army, and was elected Chaplain of the 33rd Illinois Volunteers in 1861.

The church struggled along. The building was not yet completed, and at one time it would have been sold for debt had not the trustees, Samuel Lander, John Enlow, and William G. Thompson, become personally responsible for the amount due. In order to meet his share of the burden, William G. Thompson mortgaged his farm. All honor to those men of blessed memory! Finally by great effort, devotion, and sacrifice the building was finished, and on October 12, 1862, more than six years after the work was undertaken, Rev. Eddy was called home to preach the dedicatory sermon. His text was "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts," Psalm 84:1. Then Rev. Eddy offered his resignation.

Two hundred thirty had been gathered into the church during his six and one-half years as pastor. The resolution offered upon the acceptance of his resignation showed the deep love held for him by the church. It seemed almost impossible to carry on without his wise leadership and cheery encouragement.

While he had been away and until another pastor was chosen, Rev. D. D. Read of Shurtleff College, Rev. Hosea Howard, a returned Missionary, and Rev. Thomas Green, a student at Shurtleff had been supplies. On November 1, 1862, Dr. Lemuel Porter of Pittsfield, Mass., was called to the vacant pulpit. He served the church only one year, being compelled to resign because of failing health.

Dr. Porter had outstanding qualities of a social nature. He made friends easily. He was a godly man, a fine sermonizer, sound in doctrine. He had great ability in teaching what he believed. Under him the church adopted what is known as the New Hampshire Articles of Faith. During his term of service, sixteen were added to the church roll.

For sixteen months supplies were again depended upon. Rev. D. D. Read served most of the time. On March 4, 1865, Rev. Frank M. Ellis accepted the pastorate and for two years and ten months he filled the position most acceptably. His preaching services were largely attended. He was a forceful, magnetic speaker. In 1866 the Normal church was set off from this one with twenty-three members. Eighty-four new members were added to our own roll. The South Mission enterprise was also commenced.

On January 1, 1868, Dr. Ellis resigned. The church felt discouraged and heart-broken, but there was much earnest praying. The women of the church met in private homes for prayer many times each week. Then there was born a general desire to meet at the church for conference, singing and prayer. Conversions followed, and a general refreshing, which was looked back to for many years and remembered as one of the most precious revivals the church had ever experienced.



After a period of six months, during which Rev. Read and others acted as supplies, Rev. Charles E. Hewett was engaged as pastor, and entered into his duties July 1, 1868. For eight years this pleasant, helpful relationship of pastor and people continued. It was the longest pastorate by eighteen months the church had ever enjoyed. Rev. Hewett was tireless in labor both in public and in private religious work. The increase in church membership was unequaled in any previous years. Rev. Hewett held a school of instruction for children who asked for church membership, thus giving them a clear understanding of its meaning.

During this period, the West Mission Chapel was secured at a cost of \$2,000, and extensive repairs were made on the church building. The aggregate amount expended for the cause of Christ during the eight years was estimated to be \$40,000. The total membership was now 504. Rev. Hewett's closing sermon, beautiful, tender, and impressive, was from Philippeans 1:27, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ."

Only three and one-half months later, on October 15, 1876, Dr. O. B. Stone accepted a call to serve as pastor. He was a wonderful man, a fine executive, sound and judicious, a devoted pastor, a sincere friend. The church prospered greatly under his leadership. Harmony prevailed.

Toward the close of a four years' service he was compelled to ask the church that his pastorate close the last Sunday in July, 1880. Dr. Stone's illness was brought about by excessive daily labor and the care of his sick wife. This beloved man of God, though entirely disabled, continued to live among his former parishioners—a monument of self-sacrificing devotion to the interests of others, and of cheerful faith and patience in suffering. During Dr. Stone's pastorate there were 168 additions to the church, ninety-eight of whom were by baptism. He and his invalid wife both died here. His call came in 1889; she lingered for six years and four months longer, passing to her reward in July, 1895. "They do rest from their labors and their works do follow them."

In October, 1880, Dr. D. D. Read became pastor. He needed no introduction to the church as at three different times he had served as substitute pastor. He remained with the church until April 18, 1884—a period of three and one-half years. During this time 167 had been added to the church, 87 of whom were by baptism.

From the earliest history of the church to near the close of Dr. Read's pastorate there had never occurred anything which had seriously disturbed its peace and harmony. At this time, however, there arose a complication of questions and issues in which good brethren differed. As a result, the

whole church became involved in a controversy which was peculiar, delicate, and trying in the extreme. But the trouble was of short duration. The perplexing questions soon found their solution in the request for letters of dismissal by fifty-four members for the purpose of forming another church. The letters were granted and the Prairie Street Baptist Church was organized and a pastor chosen in 1884.

Less than two months later, on June 1, 1884, into this troubled mother church fold, the Lord sent Rev. John L. Jackson, of blessed memory. He came to the church in its time of greatest need. It had been torn by conflicting opinions. Disaster had threatened. Under Rev. Jackson's wise leadership the church was re-united in bonds of harmony and brotherly love, and moved forward in work for the Master as never before in its history. Rev. Jackson preached to crowded houses. Many additions to the church were constantly recorded. Not only the church members but also the entire community recognized the marvelous qualities of mind and heart possessed by Rev. Jackson. For six blessed years this relationship of pastor and people continued, growing more precious and helpful each year. Early in 1887 plans were completed whereby the members of the Prairie Street Baptist Church came back and again became one with the mother church, both as to membership and property. They were accorded a sincere welcome.

Because the church was too small to accommodate the great numbers who came to the services, and also because our hopes were high and our courage strong, we were willing and ready to attempt still more for our Master's cause. Therefore, plans were formulated for building a new church to replace the one we had occupied for the past thirty years. Through a marvelous year of preparation we came together on June 4, 1888, in the quiet of eventide to lay the corner stone of the new church at the corner of Jefferson and Gridley Streets. Promptly at seven o'clock in the evening the services began. The Schubert Quartette sang "Within These Holy Walls," Dr. Jackson gave a brief address, the Chairman of the building commission, who was also the Mayor of Bloomington, Hon. J. R. Mason, made the closing remarks and placed the stone in position with the usual box of records enclosed. Rev. F. M. Smith of Hudson led in prayer and Rev. A. H. Rhodes pronounced the benediction. It was a service long remembered.

The building progressed rapidly and on Sunday, November 25, 1888, the completed church building was dedicated with impressive ceremonies. The church was filled to overflowing by members and friends. Dr. G. W. Northrup of Morgan Park, President of the Baptist Theological Seminary, delivered the morning sermon. In the afternoon a second service was held



with A. A. Kendrick, D.D., President of Shurtleff College, Upper Alton, as speaker, and in the evening Dr. Northrup again gave a wonderful sermon. The total cost of the building and the lot was \$34,987. Of this amount, \$8,000 was pledged on the day of dedication. The dedicatory prayer was made by the beloved pastor, Dr. J. L. Jackson, giving to the Lord our new church building, free from all debt. Never, while memory endures, will the events of this day be forgotten by those privileged to be present.

On the following Wednesday evening, the first prayer and Covenant meeting in the new church was held. It was Thanksgiving Eve, and the first family gathering in the new church home. A beautiful solemn spirit of thanksgiving rested like a halo over the meeting and a renewed desire to consecrate ourselves more fully to our Lord who giveth richly all we enjoy. The membership was now 613. It was not easy to leave the old church home where we had come together for worship for thirty years, and where so many souls had been born into the Kingdom. Until we really came to give it up, we had not realized how much we loved it, nor the vital place it had held in our own lives and in the religious activity of the entire community. Memories sweetest, dearest, will ever cluster about that old building as it used to be, and the spot where once it stood. Memories are all we have left of the church building, for it was completely destroyed in the great fire that swept over Bloomington on June 19, 1900.

The work in the new church progressed wonderfully, harmoniously, happily. In 1889 a fine church paper, called "The Baptist," was edited and published. Many new plans in other departments were carried to completion. It was the happiest, most fruitful period the church had ever experienced.

On April 20, 1890, Dr. Jackson presented his resignation that he might take up work in the Fountain Street Baptist Church at Grand Rapids, Michigan. Regretfully the resignation was accepted. Resolutions showing the place Dr. Jackson held in the hearts of the church members were presented and adopted. Tearful farewells were spoken and again, as so many times in the past, the church faced the future pastorless—like sheep without a shepherd.

Dr. Hulbert of Chicago became the first supply pastor. Dr. Cooley followed until July, 1890, when, in response to a call, Rev. W. B. Riley of Lafayette, Indiana, became pastor. Rev. Riley was a young man and unmarried. He had splendid mental qualities. He was a vigorous and convincing speaker. In December, he married Miss Lillian Howard of Lafayette, Indiana, and the church had the joy of welcoming a beautiful, refined, and cultured woman as their pastor's wife. She filled this difficult

position with rare grace and tact, winning all hearts. For two and one-half years Rev. Riley gave himself tirelessly to the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom and the salvation of souls. In December, 1892, he accepted a call to the Calvary Baptist Church of Chicago and soon thereafter left for his new field of labor. Much good was accomplished during his pastorate and a large number were added to the church.

After Rev. Riley's departure, a call was extended to Rev. C. F. Winbigler of Riverside, California. He accepted the call, but asked the church to wait for him until certain plans could be carried out which he had already set in motion in Riverside. It was voted to grant his request. Dr. Kendrick became our first supply, then Dr. Kennard. Eight months later, in April, 1894, Rev. Winbigler arrived and began work. He was a fluent and forceful speaker and his fine sermons were greatly appreciated.

One of his outstanding accomplishments was a thorough revising of the Church Constitution. Many changes were suggested and the Constitution was adopted as revised. At the first annual meeting, in October, 1894, the pastor suggested the creation of the office of Lady Deacons with specific duties. The office was created but the name was later changed to "Church Visiting Committee."

In 1894 revival meetings under the leadership of Rev. George Cairnes were held. These meetings resulted in many additions to the church and brought a great blessing to the community. In 1896, Rev. Winbigler resigned, after a pastorate covering a little over two years. During this time 104 had been received into the church by baptism and fifty-eight by letter—a total of 162.

Rev. Winbigler left for the East, July 1, 1896. Dr. D. H. Cooley of Morgan Park was asked to come as supply until another pastor was secured. Dr. Cooley seemed like an old friend, as he had been our supply twice before. His work was greatly blessed and much appreciated. On August 23, 1896, Dr. Stanley A. McKay of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, accepted the call to the church and arrived September 13, 1896, to begin work. The membership was now 816.

Dr. McKay had a genial, attractive personality and preached fine sermons. His pastorate was outstanding because of two great periods of revivals. The first one was in April, 1898, when Dr. Shepherdson, the wheel-chair evangelist, conducted meetings; and the second in November, 1899, with Dr. Davidson as leader. Both were greatly blessed in the salvation of many souls.

Another occasion of much interest was on March 17, 1899, when the mortgages on both the church and mission buildings were burned in a

special ceremony. A poem written for the occasion by Mr. C. C. Hassler was read by Miss Elvira Irving. The old kettle used for the burning of the mortgages had belonged to Deacon W. G. Thompson of blessed memory and is now the property of his grandson, Roy Mays.

On February 27th and 28th, a conference of the American Baptist Missionary Union with Dr. Henry C. Mabie, Dr. William Ashmore, and other eminent speakers was held here. Most interesting and inspiring addresses were given. In April, 1900, Rev. McKay resigned to become the President of Shurtleff College, at Upper Alton, Illinois. He had been with us four happy, successful years. Beautiful farewell services were held as he and his esteemed wife left for their new field of labor.

The committee appointed to secure another pastor presented the name of Rev. Loran D. Osborn of Centralia, Illinois, to whom a call was extended. The call was accepted, and Rev. Osborn came October 28, 1900, and spent five active years here in the service of the Master. During his first year with the church, on September 30, 1901, the new Stevensonville Chapel was dedicated and turned over to the trustees. In 1902 the Woman's Union was formed by uniting into one large comprehensive body the three organizations then existing. The Men's Club was also organized in the church and the Sunday School became a Bible School. In 1904 a series of revival meetings were held in which the pastor was assisted by Rev. H. H. Alger. In 1905 Dr. W. L. Saunders was chosen pastor's assistant and began work at once. On June 17, 1905, Rev. Osborn resigned to become President of Des Moines College in Des Moines, Iowa. His stay with this church had covered a period of five years. The membership was now 742. Dr. and Mrs. Osborn had both been very active in all branches of the work of the church and were much loved.

On November 12, 1905, the church extended a call to Rev. U. S. Davis of Dayton, Ohio. It took much persuasion to induce the Dayton church to give him up to us, but finally it was arranged and he came in January, 1906.

In October, 1906, Rev. C. A. Mayhue was asked to become pastor of the South Mission which had grown to need such a service. In the fall of this year the Baptist State Convention met with this church. There was a large attendance.

In 1908 this church united with other churches in the city in the Billy Sunday Revival Meetings. About 4,000 conversions were reported, 200 of whom were added to our membership.

Dr. Davis labored tirelessly and with great success throughout his entire pastorate. During this period the church building received many

improvements and repairs; new Sunday School rooms were built and a kitchen was added; the cost as reported in October, 1910, was \$8,310.00. A beautiful new pipe organ was purchased and installed. This was a period of great prosperity for the church and never had there been so large a membership nor greater harmony and enthusiasm. In October, 1909, the membership was 1051. During Dr. Davis' pastorate 551 new members were received. In October, 1911, Dr. Davis resigned to accept the pastorate of the First Baptist Church in Akron, Ohio. He had been with this church nearly six years. Dr. and Mrs. Davis were greatly loved not only within the church, but also in the entire community. It was hard to give them up and let them go from us, but it had to be—so on December 1, 1911, we again faced the future without a pastor.

Some things seem almost too good to be true, and this was the reaction of the church when the pulpit committee announced that Dr. J. L. Jackson might consider a call to again become our pastor. The call was immediately extended and accepted. Dr. Jackson began his pastorate for the second period in January, 1912, and stayed with the church until he was called home January 18, 1924. Shortly after this, the South Mission was sold to the Church of Christ and thus passed out of our care.

In January, 1915, special meetings were held with Dr. Charles Taylor and his son, a young boy from England, assisting. These meetings aroused much interest and a large number of converts resulted. The church voted to cooperate with the Northern Baptist Convention in the five year program, and to undertake as its part in the general work for the year 1916, these objectives:

1. To strive to win 100 new members by baptism.
2. To encourage three members of the church to study for the ministry.
3. To send seven young people to college.
4. To raise our contributions for benevolences to \$1200.

The church moved steadily forward. In 1917, after an evangelistic campaign with Bob Jones as leader in which several other churches in the city joined, forty-five were added to our membership. Also, in 1917 the West Mission Chapel was sold to the Second Presbyterian Church and on the lot it had occupied was erected the Western Avenue Community Church.

Because of rapidly declining health, Dr. Jackson tendered his resignation to take effect February 1, 1924, but before that time arrived, he was called to his heavenly home. He had been with the church for six years in his first pastorate, from 1884 to 1890, and for twelve years in his second



pastorate—eighteen years in all. They were happy, prosperous years, filled with activity and growth. The record of this period can not be written by mortal pen. Only God knows the influence exerted upon the lives of those privileged to sit under his teaching.

Dr. Jackson's entire life was one of service, sympathy, goodness, and love for God and man. He possessed all the qualifications of a great leader, a marvelous pastor; and to him was granted the rare and unusual privilege of completing fifty years in the ministry.

Beautiful memorial services, with Dr. Shailer Mathews of Chicago as speaker, were held. Pulpit and press notices were received from all parts of the Baptist world. The bereaved church Dr. Jackson had served so long and had so deeply loved will ever hold sacred the memory of his upright, blameless life, his wise guidance, and his marvelous teaching. It can be truly said of him: "He was one of God's own."

Dr. H. O. Rolands of Oak Park was chosen as pulpit supply, to remain until a pastor was chosen. July 6, 1924, a call was extended to Dr. Charles E. Durden of Galesburg, Illinois, who came on October 5, 1924. At Easter time the following spring, he inaugurated and conducted a series of noon time sermons appropriate for the season, at the Irvin Theatre. These services lasted just forty minutes each day. They were well attended and turned many hearts and minds toward the glorious significance of the Easter season.

During these years there was great activity along all lines of religious endeavor in the church. The Boy Scout work became outstanding, with our Troop 8 a prize winner in many events. The young people were especially helpful and busy.

On January 19, 1930, Dr. Durden resigned to accept the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Omaha, Nebraska. He had been a fine sermonizer; he had exerted his influence upon the life of the city in many directions. Because of his gift of oratory he lectured far and wide whenever his church duties permitted.

Rev. Forrest L. Fraser was asked to be interim pastor and preached his first sermon on March 5, 1930. Because he was so well liked, he became regular pastor on June 22, 1930. At the annual meeting which occurred January 4, 1931, a new plan of making reports was inaugurated which met with general approval. The reports, given in writing earlier in the week, were condensed and a digest was made covering the main items, then combined into one brief, comprehensive report. Dr. and Mrs. Peterson were guests on this occasion. He was the speaker of the evening. Miss Hilsabeck was chosen Church Secretary. The motto for the coming year was: "Bigger and Better."

During the next year the work moved along with spirit and harmony. A committee was appointed to again go over the Constitution; and if necessary, draft a new one. When the next Annual Meeting time came, Dr. H. W. Virgin of the North Shore Baptist Church of Chicago was guest speaker. We were now coming into the depression period, and plans were constantly made that the church might ride the storm with as little visible change as possible. The new Constitution was submitted and adopted. There were now two B.Y.P.U. groups, composed of young people of different ages. The Prayer Meetings were well attended. They were larger than ever before in the history of the church.

In 1933 the church and Sunday School suffered a severe loss in the death of Mr. H. O. Stone, one of the finest and most efficient of our members. He was the son of Dr. O. B. Stone, who was one of the former pastors. For many years he had been superintendent of the Sunday School and later of the Bible School. He was active in all branches of church work and held positions of honor and responsibility. His loss will be felt for years to come.

During Rev. Fraser's pastorate the Young Married People's Group was organized and became very helpful. A Dramatic Club was also formed and rendered pleasing assistance in many ways. Rev. Fraser resigned September 19, 1934, to become pastor of the First Baptist Church of Saginaw, Michigan. Farewell services were held for him and his esteemed wife, and regretfully the pleasant relationship that had existed for the past four years came to a close.

Rev. George Sneath, who lived in Normal, was asked to be pastor until a permanent one could be chosen. For an entire year he labored for the church, giving fine sermons and rendering such other services as are needed in every community. All this time the church was not idle. Improvements were made along many lines. A new heating and wiring system was installed; attractive floor coverings were laid in the Sunday School rooms and in the adjacent class rooms. The Pulpit Committee held frequent meetings. Finally, after much searching and many prayers, a call was extended to Rev. Ralph G. Carson, of Dayton, Ohio. The call was accepted and the newly chosen pastor began work September 15, 1935. With renewed faith and courage and with high hopes for the future, the church looks forward to great days to come with so fine a leader.

On August 22, 1937, the church sustained a severe loss in the death of Dr. Ernest Mammen. Dr. Mammen was the senior Deacon, having held the office since July, 1885—a period of more than fifty years. He had been prominent in all departments of church work and had held many important positions. He had been a Trustee for many years, Chairman of the



Pulpit Committee several times, a Bible Class teacher in the Sunday School. He was for twenty-five years a member of the State Board of the Illinois Baptist Convention. He was a man of outstanding qualities of mind and heart, a fine Christian gentleman. He will be greatly missed.

During the one hundred years of its existence the church has had twenty-three different pastors; only Dr. J. L. Jackson died in office. Six of those who have guided the church through the years are still living. There have been wonderful supplies, also, whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. This church has been as a light set upon a hill. Thousands have heard the gospel preached from this pulpit; other thousands have come into the knowledge of Christ the Savior and into a new life. There have gone out from here ministers and missionaries bearing the message of salvation. Among them are:

FRANK FAGERBURG  
WILLIAM STEINKRAUS  
D. D. HAGGARD, JR.  
ASA BALLARD  
L. W. TERRY  
FRED HAGGARD  
MILTON BOWEN  
WARREN LYNES

H. D. BEDFORD  
R. M. WOODWORTH  
A. I. COX  
JOSHUA TOEDTE  
ELIZABETH HAYNES WORLEY  
GERTRUDE MILLER  
MILDRED JONES

As the time drew near for the celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of the church, its proper observance became a paramount objective. The Illinois State Baptist Convention was asked to hold its 93rd annual meeting here October 19-21, 1937. This brought many ministers and missionaries of outstanding prominence in religious work in this state and a large gathering of lay members. It was a most profitable and enjoyable occasion.

The One Hundredth Anniversary was celebrated in December, 1937, with commemorative services throughout the month.

Pioneer Sunday was observed December 5th with the pastor speaking, in the morning, on "The Spirit of the Pioneers," and in the evening on "One Hundred Golden Years." The roll of the church was called at the morning service December 12th. Centennial Christmas services were observed December 19th, with a special evening program of Christmas music under the direction of Mrs. Porter Phillips.

The Centennial sermon was preached Sunday morning, December 26th, by Dr. Paul Lamont Thompson, President of Shurtleff College. An impressive historical pageant, written by Mrs. C. E. Decker, depicting outstanding events in the history of the church, was given in the evening. On

Founders' Day, December 30th, the Centennial Birthday Banquet was served. A feature was the presentation of a large birthday cake with 100 candles. Rev. Guy H. Wimmer, Executive Secretary of the Illinois Baptist State Convention and member of the First Baptist Church, gave the birthday address. It was an occasion long to be remembered.

From earliest days the women of this church have been true helpers in financial endeavor, as well as in all branches of religious, missionary, and Sunday School work. No records can be found of their activities in the formative years of the church, but results obtained through their efforts since then bear out the statement that they did their full share then, as now, and that those early years were busy, happy ones, filled with willing and loving service. In those earlier years there were three organizations among the women: The Ladies Social Union, the Woman's Foreign Mission Society, the Woman's Home Mission Society, each doing the work suggested by its name. Those who are old enough will remember the work done by the Ladies Social Union in the old church. The concerts and lectures that were sponsored, the meals served and the Rally Dinners cooked for political meetings certainly kept every one busy. Sometimes these dinners were served in the church dining room, and sometimes in an empty store building down town, rented for the purpose. These women paid for the first Pipe Organ the church ever owned. It cost \$3,000 and was considered the finest organ in town at that time. We were certainly proud of it. Many other fine and helpful services were rendered by this band of earnest women and for many years the same type of work was done in the same way.

Realizing there must be a better way to accomplish the same results, in the year 1902, an entire change was made in the organization. Dr. Loran D. Osborne was pastor at that time and gave valuable assistance and encouragement in the perfecting of a plan which has been followed ever since with much success. This plan was the merging of the three woman's organizations into one large comprehensive body called "The Woman's Union," having under its care all the interests heretofore included in the three organizations. The ideal was that the new organization should include every woman in the church and should work for all the interests of the church, carrying through committees the various lines of work. For more than thirty-five years this plan has been adhered to and its value proved beyond question. In the year 1907 the Woman's Union pledged \$3,000 toward the \$8,000 needed for repairs and the erection of the east wing, containing the Sunday School room and kitchen. The Union was given three years to raise the money, and to their credit be it said, they did it, and on time. In 1909 this same body of women served a Banquet

for the City Mail Carriers and their wives. Three hundred five people were served. The largest amount of money raised in a single year was in 1909-1910. This amount was \$2,173.40. During the World War these women gave 2,000 hours to Red Cross work in addition to the hours given at home. Also, for two years they paid for the support of two French orphan children. All these things were accomplished besides the regular religious work which had a definite place in each life.

Many earnest, consecrated women have served as officers of these church organizations—women who have stood high in the religious, literary, and social life of the community. It is impossible to mention them all by name. Mrs. Alice H. Rossney held the office of Treasurer for thirty-five years, which is a most remarkable record, and one of which the church is justly proud. Because of ill health she has been forced to resign. Mrs. Ora W. Gridley was the first president under the new organization and Mrs. J. M. Fordice was the second president, each holding the position for twelve years. And the work still goes on as of yore, guided by efficient, consecrated women. Since its organization in 1843 there has always been a large and interesting Sunday School, which at one time was called a Bible School.

There have been fine superintendents, officers, and teachers. It is impossible to mention by name those who have given of their time and talents to this important service. In the Adult Department the Men's Class and the Women's Class have both been outstanding in numbers and in continued interest. A fine class of young women has ever been a source of religious strength and inspiration. From the other departments have come each year many additions to the church. The Young People's organizations have kept pace with the times and have included Y.P.S.C.E., B.Y.P.U., Junior and Senior, and many others. The Soronians, organized by Mrs. Loran D. Osborn in 1902, were the leaders among the young women and girls for nearly twenty years. The name signifies "Sisters," and this group lived up to its name in loving service. In 1921 it was reorganized into "The Get Together Club." In 1936 a new Soronian Society with a large membership came into being under the direction of Mrs. Ralph G. Carson and Mrs. Charles E. Decker.

The Boy Scouts have added much to the achievements among the boys. Missionary interests have been carried on through Mission Bands, Temple Builders, and W.W.G. groups. For a period of years Miss St. John was the Missionary under the especial care of the church and its organizations. The Woman's Union has contributed freely and generously to the Missionary budget, and as an extra offering, is supporting Miss Ruth Chang,

of China. The Woman's Sunday School Class is educating Ah-me, a little Chinese girl of Ningpo, China, and contributes to a Leper Colony.

In glancing back over the history of our one hundred years, the memory of many achievements stand out before us. We know that to God belongs the glory. When we have all worked together toward the same ideal, prayerfully and earnestly, blessings both temporal and spiritual have been showered upon us.

One hundred years ago twenty brave and consecrated men and women organized this church. Our membership is now 1053. If ours is the courage and consecration of the Founders, then the years ahead will be as fruitful in blessings and accomplishments as the past.

We stand today upon the threshold of another century. A new era is before us filled with opportunity. The world belongs to the latest born and to them is given the priceless privilege of carrying forward to a glorious climax the work for our Lord and Master, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever."

## PASTORS

REV. ISAAC NEWELL . . . . .	1837-1839
REV. CHARLES DODGE . . . . .	1840-1841
REV. LYMAN WHITNEY . . . . .	1843-1846
REV. THOMAS HOLEMAN . . . . .	1846-1847
REV. S. W. MILLER . . . . .	1847-1848
REV. JASON CORWIN . . . . .	1850-1851
REV. H. D. MASON . . . . .	1851-1852
REV. S. P. IVES . . . . .	1852-1856
REV. H. J. EDDY . . . . .	1856-1862
DR. LEMUEL PORTER . . . . .	1862-1863
REV. FRANK M. ELLIS . . . . .	1865-1868
DR. CHARLES E. HEWETT . . . . .	1868-1876
DR. O. B. STONE . . . . .	1876-1880
DR. D. READ . . . . .	1880-1884
DR. J. L. JACKSON . . . . .	1884-1890
REV. W. B. RILEY . . . . .	1890-1892
REV. C. F. WINBIGLER . . . . .	1894-1896
DR. STANLEY A. MCKAY . . . . .	1896-1900
REV. LORAN D. OSBORN . . . . .	1900-1905
DR. U. S. DAVIS . . . . .	1906-1911
DR. J. L. JACKSON . . . . .	1912-1924
DR. CHARLES E. DURDEN . . . . .	1924-1930
REV. FOREST L. FRASER . . . . .	1930-1934
REV. RALPH G. CARSON . . . . .	1935-

## PASTORS STILL LIVING

DR. W. B. RILEY . . . . .	Minneapolis, Minnesota
DR. LORAN D. OSBORN . . . . .	Los Angeles, California
DR. U. S. DAVIS . . . . .	West Harwich, Massachusetts
REV. CHAS. E. DURDEN . . . . .	Omaha, Nebraska
REV. FOREST L. FRASER . . . . .	Saginaw, Michigan
REV. RALPH G. CARSON . . . . .	Bloomington, Illinois



# The History of First German Baptist Church

In January, 1872, the German Baptist Mission was meeting in a little chapel located on the corner of West Locust Street and Western Avenue. Its first leader was a Missionary named Mr. Henry Dohrman. There was morning worship. Sunday School was held in the afternoon from two until three o'clock, which was conducted in German. From three until four o'clock English Sunday School was held.

Later in the year Mr. Dohrman was appointed the head of the Baptist Orphanage in Louisville, Kentucky. In 1873 Rev. F. Melchert, then pastor of the First German Baptist Church in Minonk, Illinois, came once a month to hold services, and in 1874 the Mission was organized into a church which was called the First German Baptist Church of Bloomington, Illinois.

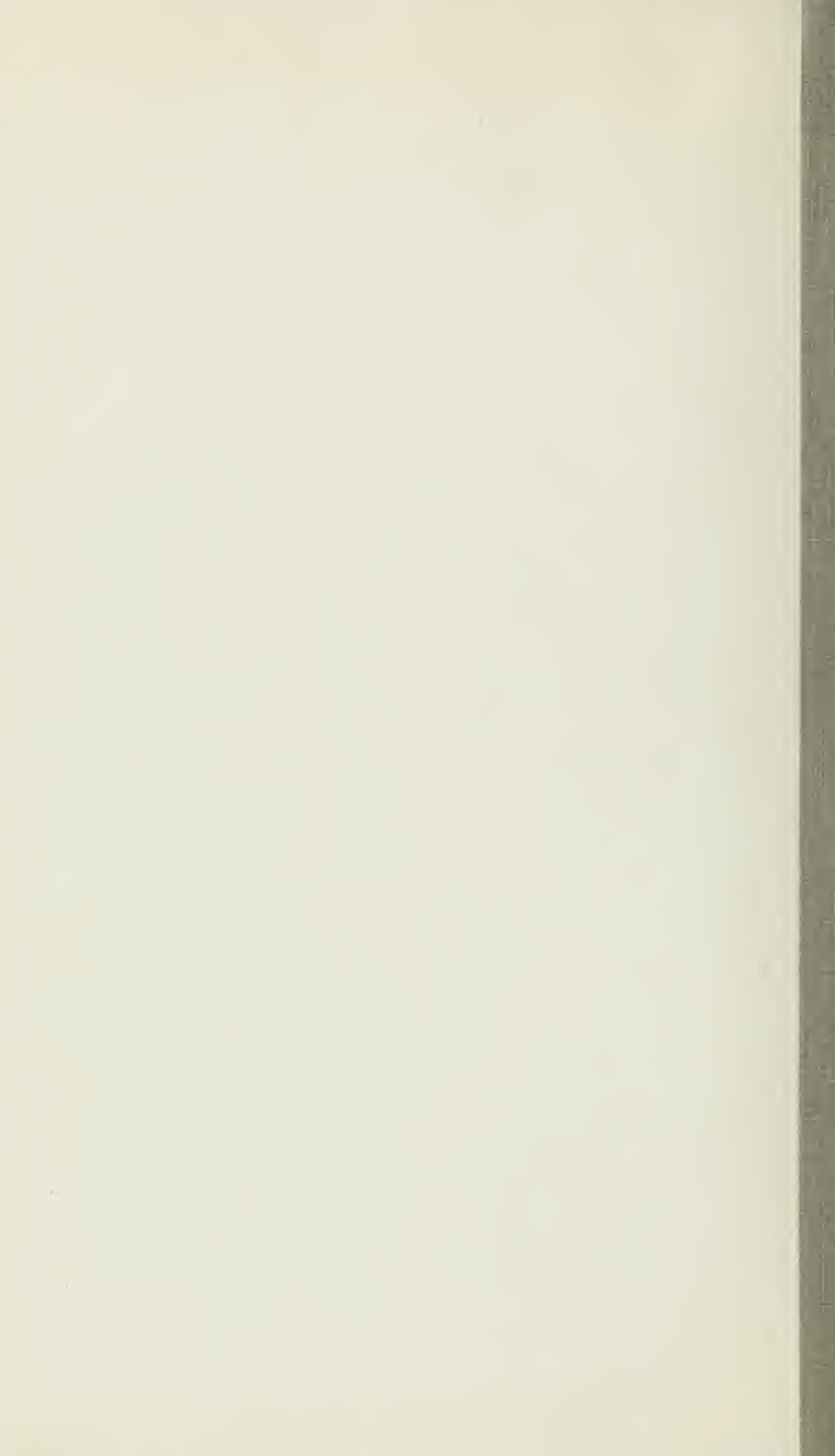
The Committee of organization consisted of Rev. Charles E. Hewett and D. B. Harwood of the Bloomington Baptist Church; Rev. Bevan, Dr. Bates and Mr. C. Gregory of the Normal Baptist Church; Rev. L. H. Donner of Peoria, Rev. H. C. Haselhun and C. H. Coners of Chicago. Rev. Bevan was Committee Chairman. Rev. G. D. Manger was chosen pastor of the newly organized church which began its work with a membership of twenty-eight. The place of meeting was the chapel, known as the West Mission of the English Baptist Church.

In 1877 Rev. Manger resigned and Rev. H. Wernick was called to the pastorate in 1878. During his stay as pastor he secured a lease for ninety-nine years on the building the church had occupied since its organization. Rev. Wernick resigned in October, 1881, and Rev. H. Fellman was chosen pastor. He served the church until 1887.

Rev. John Miller was the next pastor and remained with the church until May 17, 1893. At this time the membership was 69. Two young men, Carl Marquardt and Mr. Krosh, members of the church, were sent to the German Baptist Theological Seminary at Rochester, New York, to prepare for the ministry. The Rev. Martin Domke was called as pastor the latter part of 1893 and held the pastorate until March, 1895. Because of deaths and removals the membership had become too small to sustain a full time pastor, so Rev. H. Schrader came down from Chicago once each month and conducted services. Then the church disbanded; those who wished united with the English Baptist Church. Finally the building was taken down and on that site now stands the Western Avenue Community Church. Mr. Gustave Mueller, now a Deacon in the First Baptist Church of Bloomington, was a trustee and Sunday School Superintendent for many years. Dr. Ernest Mammen was always a welcome visitor.









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HISTORY OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF B



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